



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-713-2503 Fax: 860-713-2516
An Equal Opportunity Employer



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 3, 2011

Contact: Linda Piotrowicz
Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov or 860-713-2558

Connecticut's Greenhouse Growers Offer Bountiful Blooms and Vigorous Vegetable Plants

Hartford, CT – As buds swell across Connecticut, so do the excitement and anticipation of the state's gardeners. May is prime planting time for flowers and vegetables, and Connecticut's greenhouse growers have been hard at work these last several months to produce premium transplants for the garden—often referred to as bedding plants—as well as hanging baskets and holiday plants for Mother's Day.

“What better gift for Mom than a beautiful Connecticut Grown flowering basket?” asked Commissioner Steven Reviczky of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. “Of course, if she's a vegetable lover, a potted cherry tomato or cucumber plant is a great choice, too. Or perhaps one of each,” he added with a smile.

Connecticut boasts an abundance of bedding plant producers. According to the [Connecticut Green Industries](http://www.flowersplantsinct.com) (www.flowersplantsinct.com), around 300 commercial greenhouse businesses across the state have a combined production space of approximately 9,000,000 SF and total about \$200 million in wholesale sales each year. Because Connecticut Grown bedding plants are already acclimated to the local climate and have not been subjected to the stress of long-distance shipping, they are ideally suited for the Connecticut garden.

Experts recommend waiting until after the average last frost date to put bedding plants into the home garden, since many can be damaged or killed by freezing temperatures. While that date varies depending on the part of the state, most areas of Connecticut should be safe from risk of frost in late May. However many eager gardeners take their chances and plant as early as the first or second week of May, taking care to bring in hanging baskets and cover gardens with protective fabric when temperatures threaten to reach the freezing mark. The University of Connecticut Extension System's [Home and Garden Education Center](http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu) (www.ladybug.uconn.edu or 877-486-6271) can advise residents as to the best time to plant for their specific location.

As many as 2,000 customers seeking a wide variety of Connecticut Grown bedding plants, hanging baskets, shrubs, and trees turn out in the wee hours of the morning each weekend of the spring season to shop from up to 60 vendors at the farmers' market held on the grounds of the [Hartford Regional Market](http://www.CTGrown.gov) (www.CTGrown.gov > About Us or 860-527-5047). Saturday of Mother's Day weekend is usually the busiest day of the year there, as people flock to the market to find the freshest, healthiest gift plants for their special loved ones. Market officials recommend shoppers bring a flashlight and arrive early for best selection. Gates are open from 5:00 to 9:00 a.m.

Consumers who prefer to sleep in can find retailers of Connecticut Grown bedding plants through the [Connecticut Garden and Landscape Trail](http://www.ctgardentrail.com) (www.ctgardentrail.com). This informative guide features over 60 facilities of Connecticut's Green Industry, including nurseries, garden centers, greenhouses, and landscapers, along with information about more than three dozen beautiful public garden sites.

CONNECTICUT GROWN - The Local Flavor

www.CTGrown.gov www.ct.gov/doag

###